



Navarre Town Center Plan

Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners

October 28, 2004



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Organization of the Document



This document serves to present the process and the product of the Navarre Town Center Plan. It is the culmination of over six months of work by hundreds of individuals, most of them volunteers from the Navarre community. The quality of this final plan is a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the community members.

Each Section of the document is described below:

- The introduction describes a brief history of Navarre and the older community to the north, Holley. This information served as a basis in development of the plan and is key to understanding the final recommendations. The introduction also explains why the process was implemented for the Navarre area and lists key figures in the process.
- Basic background and demographic information is provided in the Existing Conditions section. Some analysis of problem areas is also provided.
- The Process and Public Involvement were keys to the success of the planning effort and will continue to remain important to the success of implementation.
- The Recommendation section is the heart of the document. Each recommendation was born from the discussion in the Working Groups and reviewed and approved by the Steering Group.
- Many of these recommendations will be costly. The section on Funding Sources and Incentives describes the strategies for both public and private funding of the recommended improvements.
- In the Implementation Section, the recommendations are prioritized and the responsible agencies are listed. The Planning and Zoning Department will assume the responsibility of coordinating all implementation even when not the primary responsible party.
- Hurricane Ivan struck just two days after the final public meeting on the Navarre Town Center Plan. This section describes how the process was impacted by the disaster and ensuing recovery. Implementation will continue to be affected by Hurricane Ivan well into the future.

Executive Summary

The Town Center Plan Process was initiated in March 2004 at a public workshop where participants outlined their vision for their community. This vision was presented to members of four working groups:

- Land Use
- Infrastructure
- Architecture
- Landscaping

These groups were composed of members from throughout the Navarre area. Participation was not limited and members were not appointed to their position. This was a completely volunteer based effort. Based on the Community's vision for itself, these working groups developed ideas and strategies to guide Navarre toward this vision. The working group recommendations were forwarded to a Steering Group, which was composed of representatives selected by each of the working groups. The Steering Group synthesized the recommendations from all four groups. The Key Recommendations are listed below.

Key Recommendations

- Create two distinct districts in the Navarre Area
 - Town Center District
 - Heart of Navarre District
- In these districts:
 - Land uses are more restricted
 - Architectural review required for building styles and colors
 - More stringent sign regulations
 - Incentives and increased requirements for landscaping
- Infrastructure improvements in targeted areas
 - Local transportation system improvements such as sidewalks, road paving etc..
 - Sewer and water system retrofitting, extension and improvements
 - Stormwater retention retrofitting
 - Undergrounding utilities
 - Street lighting

- Encourage Neighborhood Commercial and Multi-Family development in targeted sections of the Navarre Area
- Target areas for parks, trails and public spaces
 - Plazas
 - Civic Buildings
 - Ampitheatre
- Create Viewshed protection requirements to protect the public view of the Sound and East Bay River
- Create Land Preservation Options to ensure land is set aside for open space or passive parks if density is increased in the Navarre Area
- Building Height
 - Designate small areas of increased height to ensure that tall buildings are not strung out on US98 along the entire peninsula

The final recommendations and plan were presented to the Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners for approval on October 28, 2004. Implementation of the recommendations will occur over a period of months and years. While many recommendations can be implemented immediately, others will take 10 to 20 years to come to full fruition.

Introduction

History of Navarre

Navarre, Florida is located on the eastern end of a peninsula created by Santa Rosa Sound, East Bay, East Bay River and Pensacola Bay. Its history has always been tied to the water. The region, which includes Pensacola, was populated with Native Americans who subsisted on the bounty of the land and water. Europeans first set foot in the area when Tristan De Luna sailed into Pensacola Bay in 1559. In the 1700s, the British moved onto the west end of the peninsula to settle Town Point, now known as Gulf Breeze.

The earliest modern settlers near Navarre came to the Holley area in the 1840s. Holley is north of Navarre, across East Bay River. Settlers of this area included the somewhat mythical figure, Billy Bowlegs, an alleged pirate. Holley was extremely isolated; mail was taken by boat to Pensacola, or to Gulf Breeze when that Post Office opened in 1936. The community was made even more isolated in the 1940s, when the U.S. Air Force created a 464,000 acre reserve north and east of Holley. Many residents were completely displaced from their homes.

In 1925, Colonel Guy H. Wyman, a retired Army engineer from DeFuniak Springs, founded Navarre and created the original plat. He named the area after a picturesque province in northern Spain. However, Navarre remained sparsely populated and included few permanent residents. The Navarre Beach Cabins at the intersection of US98 and SR87 was, for many years, the only large commercial development. A mixture of beach homes and fish camps dotted the area until the 1960s.

Development began to occur rapidly in the 1960s after the bridge from Navarre to Santa Rosa Island was built. This barrier island on the Gulf of Mexico is separated from Navarre by Santa Rosa Sound. It protects Navarre and affords residents and tourists alike abundant recreational opportunities.

The original plat laid out by Col. Wyman was pivotal in the Navarre Town Center Planning Process. The streets in the grid he created north of US98 and east of SR87 have 100 and 120 foot right of ways. This area was selected by the Working Groups as the Town Center District.

The historic building patterns were also important in development of the plan. Residential structures in the area were largely frame vernacular with high pitched roofs and front porches. This is reflected in the architectural standards for the Navarre Area districts.

It was important from the outset that this plan build upon the rich history of the region and specifically of the Navarre community. Interviews with members of the Holley Pioneer association were conducted and members of the working groups considered historic structures and building patterns in their discussions and, ultimately, their recommendations.

Why This Plan?

The Navarre Town Center Planning Process was initiated by Commissioner Gordon Goodin in early 2004. As the Commission representative for and a resident of the Navarre Area, he recognized the need to move on an idea that had been discussed for several years. The need for a targeted plan for Navarre was recognized during the South End Special Area Plan. This plan was a broad plan for the entire peninsula encompassing both land use and transportation. It recommended a small area plan focusing solely on the community of Navarre.

The Navarre Town Center Plan is a response to growth demands in the area and a desire for some redevelopment. The Navarre community has a rich history and a strong, involved community, but lacked clear identity. This plan helped Navarre define itself and create standards that will guide development to reinforce that identity.

The purpose of the Plan is to:

- Develop a Vision for the Future of Navarre
- Determine how and where growth and development can/should occur
- Establish Guidelines for Development such as Overlay Districts
- Recommend Priorities and Financing Alternatives

Key Figures

2004 Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners

Don Salter, Chairman
Gordon Goodin, Vice-Chairman
Buck Lee
Bob Cole
Robert Hillard

Navarre Town Center Plan Steering Group Members

Gaius Bruce
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*Commissioner Gordon
Goodin*